

Report to the Director of Children’s Services for permission to publish a public notice

The Proposal: To close Mileham Primary School

<p>Reason for the proposed change</p>	<p>The proposal is to close Mileham Primary School on 31 August 2015.</p> <p>Numbers on roll have not exceeded 30 since September 2008, although the school has space for 49. In September 2014 there were 27 on roll, of whom only 14 live within the designated catchment area of the school. A further 31 children eligible to attend the school choose to go elsewhere (11 currently on roll at Litcham). Taking into account parental preference, pupil numbers are predicted to remain below 25 for the next ten years.</p> <p>The substantive headteacher left the school at the end of the summer term 2014. The school was not in a position to afford a high quality leader and the prospect of recruitment being successful was limited. Litcham School Governors agreed to enter into a temporary partnership for one year, whilst options for the future were assessed. Litcham School also brokered for their primary phase leader to be the acting head teacher of Mileham School.</p> <p>On taking up his post in September 2014, the acting headteacher raised a number of concerns with the Local Authority, as a result of which, the Education Intervention and Inspection Service conducted an audit of the school, which judged the school inadequate in all aspects.</p> <p>Following this audit, a Warning Notice under Section 60 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 was issued in October 2014, stating that:</p> <p><i>“The standards of performance of pupils in the school are unacceptably low”. “There is variability in the school’s performance over time and whilst groups of children are small, there is evidence of underperformance over a number of years.”</i></p> <p>Analysis of the last three years, shows that only 4 of the 11 pupils who have taken the Key Stage Two tests, achieved the national benchmark of Level 4 in Reading, Writing and Mathematics.</p> <p>The warning notice included local authority powers to “require the governing body to enter into an arrangement with another school”. At a meeting on 16 December 2014, the governors of Litcham School were asked to consider formal federation with Mileham Primary, but voted instead to consider amalgamation.</p> <p>The budgeted cost of running the school for the current academic year 2014-2015 is £9,895 per pupil, which is significantly higher than the county average cost of approximately £4,500 per pupil.</p> <p>For the above objectives and reasons, the Local Authority took the decision to consult with parents and other stakeholders on a proposal to cease to maintain the school.</p> <p>(See Appendix A – consultation document)</p>
<p>Consultation details</p>	<p>All statutory requirements in relation to the statutory consultation, publication and decision-making were complied with. The deadline for responses was extended by one week to Friday 20 March 2015.</p>

	<p>The proposal was discussed at the Children’s Services Committee on 10 March 2015.</p> <p>See Appendix B – list of consultees Appendix C – the notes of the two public meetings held at the school on 4 March 2015. Appendix D – the extract from the minutes of the 10 March Children’s Services Committee meeting.</p>
<p>Number of responses received</p>	<p>Over 800 documents were issued and a survey was placed on the NCC Consultation Hub (Citizen Space).</p> <p>37 responses were registered on the online survey. Of those: 17 (45.85%) were from parents 14 (37.84%) were from local residents 6 (16.22%) were from governors 3 (8.108%) were from local community groups 1 (2.73%) was anonymous</p> <p>4 other responses received (email/post): 1 was from the Mileham WI 1 was from Wellingham Parish Council 1 was from a local community group 1 was from a resident</p> <p>A petition signed by 156 people from the Mileham community was received and an online petition (change.org) contained comments from 209 people from the Mileham community and further afield.</p>
<p>Comments from the Children’s Services Committee 10 March 2015 meeting</p>	<p>Extract from the minutes of Children’s Services Committee 10 March 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Member for Mileham, Mr M Kiddle-Morris addressed the Committee in objection to the proposal. • It was confirmed that there was sufficient space at Litcham School to accommodate the proposed increase in pupils. • Norfolk County Council would try to ascertain ways of mitigating the costs of school uniform for those families who could not afford it. • The Assistant Director for Education advised that there was no viable alternative to the proposal as set out in the report. • The Assistant Director Education said that there were some lessons that could be learned from the initial consultation which opened on 13 February and that these would be taken on board in the future. <p>10.10 On being put to a vote and with 10 votes in favour, 7 votes against and 0 abstentions, the Committee agreed to support the recommendation that the Interim Director of Children’s Services should publish a statutory notice concerning the proposed closure of Mileham Primary School in order to amalgamate it with Litcham School.</p>

Number of responses in favour of the proposal and views expressed	<p>4 respondents stated that they were in favour of the proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local Parish Council commented that the school is uneconomical to run and that the pupils would benefit from being part of the larger school at Litcham. • The local community group gave no further comment. • A cluster headteacher agreed for the reasons as stated in the proposal. • The fourth gave no reason.
Number of responses against the proposal	<p>37 respondents stated that they disagreed with the proposal.</p> <p>The petitions were entitled:</p> <p>NCC is consulting on a formal proposal to ‘close’ Mileham Primary School wef 31 August 2015. We the undersigned, do not support this proposal. 156 signatures.</p> <p>Stop Norfolk LA from closing Mileham Primary, our wonderful small village school. 209 signatures.</p> <p>It can be seen that many people have used all three methods to register their opposition.</p>
Number expressing no preference	Not applicable.
Summary/representative views expressed against the proposal / no opinion	<p>See Appendix E for the responses made online.</p> <p>The WI registered their opposition on the grounds of ‘the harm the unwanted moved to Litcham will do to the children’s enjoyment and confidence of the small friendly environment. The worry and concern of parents. How the children would cope with the transport. The cost of the additional class and transport. The tragic effect on so many lives and the village itself.</p>
Resource implications	<p>Costs per pupil are very high at the school compared to an average county cost per pupil of £4500. Any savings generated by the closure would be available to other schools in the total delegated budget.</p> <p>Closure will result in some additional transport costs for displaced pupils.</p> <p>The site belongs to Norfolk County Council.</p>
Recommendation	That the Director of Children’s Services agrees that the proposal be moved to the next stage which is to publish a public notice.

In pursuant of the delegated powers granted to me by the Children’s Services Committee (10th July 2014) and in accordance within the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2014, I hereby give permission for a public notice to be issued on the proposal to close Mileham Primary School. This will appear in the Eastern Daily Press on Monday 13th April 2015.

Signed :
(Director of Children’s Services)

Date :2015



Statutory Consultation on a proposal to amalgamate Mileham Primary School and Litcham School into a single all-through school for pupils aged 4 – 16 from September 2015

What is the proposal?

In September 2014 when the Headteacher of Mileham Primary School left his post, Mileham and Litcham Schools entered into a temporary partnership for one year, whilst the options for the future of Mileham Primary School were assessed. This partnership has been successful and the Litcham Governors are now wishing to legally combine the two schools into a single organisation, on the current two sites of Litcham School from 1 September 2015.

In order for this to happen, legal steps have to be taken. Norfolk County Council will publish a formal proposal to 'close' Mileham Primary School with effect from 31 August 2015. All the pupils will be offered a place at Litcham School.

Why is Norfolk County Council proposing this amalgamation?

Mileham is a primary school taking pupils from the age of 4 through to 11. It was designated by the Department for Education in October 2013 as a rural primary school serving a village. The school has 7 places available in each year group, but is regularly undersubscribed. In September 2014, there were 27 pupils on roll, of whom only 14 live within the designated catchment area of the school. A further 31 children eligible to attend the school are choosing to go to schools elsewhere (11 of these children are on roll at Litcham School). Taking into account parental preference, pupil numbers are predicted to remain below 25 for the next ten years.

The school has not been able to secure sustainable leadership arrangements which ensure high standards of education for the children. Since the Headteacher left his post last summer, a number of schools have been approached, by the Local Authority and by the school with a view to formal collaboration, but it has not been possible to find a suitable partner.

The new national funding policy for schools is moving towards a national per pupil rate. This limits the way in which funding is allocated to schools through the locally agreed formula. In the past financial year, Mileham School received just over £10,000 per pupil, compared with the Norfolk primary school average of £4,500, but this level of support may not be possible in the future. The continuing decline in pupil numbers and these changes to the way that schools are funded, are making it increasingly difficult to manage the budget, and to justify such inequality of provision across all Norfolk learners.

The Governors at Litcham School agreed to enter into a temporary partnership for one year, whilst the options for the future were assessed. Litcham School also agreed for their primary phase leader to be the acting Headteacher of Mileham School. A recent Local Authority audit has raised concerns about the quality of education provided by the school.

The Litcham governing body was asked to consider the nature of the current arrangement with Mileham and concluded that they did not wish to federate, but would consider amalgamation.

What is Amalgamation?

Amalgamation is the formal name given to a way of bringing two schools together. It means one governing body, with representation from both schools. There will be one Headteacher and staffing structure, one budget and a cohesive approach to the education of children from 4+ through to age 16. All the pupils at Mileham Primary School will move to Litcham School. However, as now, parents will be able to express preferences for alternative schools for their children and the local authority will work with parents to ensure that all children transfer. There are sufficient places in neighbouring schools to accommodate displaced pupils.

What will it mean for the children?

There will be increased opportunity for the children to interact and learn from each other and share ideas through curriculum innovation. The children will benefit from greater continuity and consistency, aiding a smooth transition from the primary school to the high school.

What alternative provision will be available?

Norfolk County Council is committed to ensuring that the needs of all children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) will be met. If the closure of this school is approved, it will be essential to review the provision required for those pupils with a statement of SEN and, following consultation with individual parents, an alternative school where provision would be made available for their child will be named.

What would it mean for staff?

The expectation is that staff to provide for the additional class at Litcham, would be appointed from the present staff of Mileham School. We have an agreed way of working with staff when planning changes to school organisation, which has worked successfully in the past. Our human resources staff and local trade union officers would work with governors to make sure that staff were fully involved and consulted about proposed changes.

Who will be consulted?

Under section 16(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Local Authority as proposer of the closure of a rural primary school must consult:

- Parents of pupils at the school

- The local district or parish council where the school is situated

In addition, this document will be provided to people and organisations that may have an interest in this proposal including:

- The governing body of the school
- Pupils at the school
- All staff at the school
- The governing bodies, teachers and other staff of any other school that might be affected
- Diocesan Boards of Education
- Parents of any pupils at other schools who may be affected by the proposal
- Trades unions who represent staff at the school
- Local County Councillors and MPs

Who will make the final decision and when would the change happen?

After this consultation ends on Friday 13 March 2015, Norfolk County Council will decide whether to proceed with this proposal. If they decide to go ahead, by law we have to publish a statutory notice to close Mileham Primary School.

People would then have four weeks to write to us either supporting or opposing the proposal. The final decision would then be made by Norfolk County Council.

The earliest this change could take place would be 31 August 2015

How can I learn more about the proposal and have my say?

Come and talk to us: There will be two meetings for parents/carers and other interested members of the community:

**2.30pm on Wednesday 4 March 2015 at Mileham Primary School
and
6.00pm on Wednesday 4 March 2015 at Mileham Primary School**

You can tell us your views at <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/milehamprimaryschool> or by using the attached form, or email schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk

We need all responses by Friday 13 March 2015

If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact 01603 223480.

Proposal to amalgamate Mileham Primary School and Litcham School into a single all-through school for pupils aged 4 – 16 from September 2015

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal?

Agree

Disagree

Please give your main reasons for your answer. Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like to make to help us with this decision and in planning for the future provision of the children.

We want to hear from a wide range of people. We will use your answers to help us understand which sections of the community have responded to our consultation. You do not have to answer these questions if you do not want to.

We will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act, which means that we will not give your personal data to any third parties.

Your comments will be anonymous - your name or anything that could identify you will not be included in any report. However, we cannot guarantee that this information will be withheld if it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

Please tell us who you are:

- Pupil
- Parent / Guardian
- Member of the Parent Teacher Association
- Member of staff
- Governor
- Local resident
- Local business
- Local sports group
- Local community group

Other (please specify):

At which school? _____

What is your name?

What is your postcode?

Your views will help us to decide whether or not we make these changes. This consultation ends on **Friday 13 March 2015**.

The Director of Children's Services at Norfolk County Council will make a decision about whether or not to proceed to the next stage. If we decide to go ahead, we would then have to publish a formal public notice. A final decision would then be made in July 2015.

You can tell us your views at <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/milehamprimaryschool> by using the attached form which can be returned via your local school or email schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk or post to: Mileham School Consultation, Children's Services, FREEPOST IH2076, County Hall (Floor 8), Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2BR. You don't need a stamp.

We need all responses by Friday 13 March 2015

Appendix B

Mileham Primary School: List of consultees

Mileham Primary School, parents of pupils, staff, governors

Litcham School, parents of pupils, staff, governors

Beeston Primary School

Brisley CE VA Primary School

Great Dunham Primary School

Great Massingham CE Primary School

Harpley CE VC Primary School

Rudham CE VC Primary School

St. Mary's Community Primary School

Weasenham VC Primary School

Mileham Parish Council

Litcham Parish Council

Tittleshall Parish Council

Whisonsett Parish Council

Horningtoft Parish Council

Brisley Parish Council

Stanfield Parish Council

Beetley Parish Council

Gressenhall Parish Council

Wending Parish Council

Longham Parish Council

Beeston with Bittering Parish Council

Wellingham Parish Council

Kempstone Parish Council

Local County Councillor, Mark Kiddle-Morris

Norwich Diocese

Ely Diocese

Roman Catholic Diocese

George Freeman, MP

Chief Executive, Breckland District Council

Mrs C Gibson, NAHT

Mike Smith, NUT

Chrissie Smith, NUT

Collin Collis, NAS/UWT

Jonathan Dunning, Unison

Ivan Mercer, GMB

Bridget Carrington, JCC

Andrew McCandlish, ATL

Michael Sadler, VOICE

George Denby, NSEL

Online - NCC Internet School organisation site

Online - Norfolk Schools School organisation site

Online - NCC Citizen Hub

Appendix C

Notes from the Public Meetings held at Mileham Primary School 4 March 2015 at 2.30 pm

Present:

Chairman: Mark Kiddle-Morris (MKM), County Councillor

Representing the Local Authority (LA): Alison Cunningham (AC) and Sebastian Gasse (SG)

Representing the schools: Litcham School – Jim Adams (JA), Headteacher and Sue Falch-Lovesey (SFL), Chair of Governors

Mileham Primary School – David Simington (DS), Partnership Headteacher and Gary Sinclair (GS), Chair of Governors

25 attendees who signed in represented Governors and staff from Mileham School, Parents, Residents and the EDP. Clerk to the Meeting: Janine Birt, Norfolk County Council

Local County Councillor, Mark Kiddle-Morris opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and introducing the panel.

Alison Cunningham commented that she had just met with the children and was impressed by their thoughtful questions and how they articulated them.

She went on to explain her role within Norfolk County Council, saying that this includes overseeing formal statutory consultations on school organisation. She wanted it to be made very clear that we are at the beginning of a formal process with very distinct stages. Stage 1 (current) is the statutory consultation to gather views before any formal decision is made to publish a Public Notice of the Local Authority's intention. If, as a result of this consultation period, the amalgamation of the Litcham and Mileham schools is the right way forward (an amalgamation would mean the closure of one school and the expansion of the other), a Public Notice will be published in the local Press and displayed at the schools (Stage 2). This is accompanied by the 'Prescribed Information' which completes the 'Full Proposal'. The 'Full Proposal' can be made available to anyone who requests a copy. There is then a 4 week period (no more and no less) during which formal representations and comments can be sent to the School Organisation Team at County Hall. These are finally presented to the Decision Maker for a decision (the Determination : Stage 3).

How each County Council reaches decisions on changes to school organisation, is a matter for each and Norfolk County Council's Children's Services Committee, at its meeting in July 2014, agreed the process for Norfolk. This process means that in the case of school closure, the final 'Decision Maker' is the Director of Children's Services (DCS), in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Children's Services Committee. Any school closure will be an item on the Children's Services Committee agenda before a Public Notice is published.

Alison referred to the factors that brought the County Council to consult on the proposed closure of Mileham Primary School, namely:

- Lack of sustainable leadership – no permanent Headteacher
- A continuing decline in pupil numbers
- Difficulty in securing sustainable leadership
- Low standards and performance.

All responses to the consultation are carefully logged and will be made available to all members of the Children’s Services Committee, prior to their meeting on 10th March where their views will help inform the DCS to reach a decision about moving to the next stage, or not.

The School Organisation Team were very much aware that the way in which parents/guardians received a copy of the documents had caused offence and Alison apologised on their behalf. She commented that although names and addresses of parents/guardians had been requested from the school, they were issued with two class lists which contained only the names/addresses of the pupils. Not wanting to cause offence by assuming pupils and parents had the same surname, the term ‘The Occupier’ was used on addressed envelopes bearing the Norfolk County Council postal frank. While the Team understood the upset this had caused, it had not flawed the process in any way. Further communications would be addressed to the parents/guardians directly. A question and answer session followed:

Question/comment	Response
Litcham parent: while the emphasis is on Mileham, Litcham parents are concerned about the effect on class sizes and standards. Is the school ready to cope with the extra pupils?	JA: the school would not lend any kind of support to any kind of agreement that would have a negative impact on Litcham. If negative we would walk away. The school is preparing for all eventualities.
Parent: is there any reason why the arrangements are not continuing as at present.	JA: it is not a sustainable arrangement and the Headteacher is retiring. Mileham is very much part of the Litcham Cluster of schools and we wouldn’t want to walk away from it. SFL: the Governing Body deliberated for a very long time and would not go into this lightly. We must ensure the education side is the priority.
Litcham parent: that’s the kind of confidence we need during the current unsettling period. There isn’t much time for the school to plan for 25% more pupils at primary phase.	JA: we are very conscious that we mustn’t pre-judge the outcome but we are preparing for all eventualities.
GS: Mileham Governors have been working in tandem with Litcham Governors. All want everything to be open and the support from Litcham has been tremendous.	
Isabel Middleton: there is no guarantee that the children will go to Litcham, both are Ofsted ‘RI’. I wouldn’t send my child there. It should be about education and not appearance – why need a uniform at primary phase?	JA: improvement at Litcham has been remarkable. It is the highest performing school in the area. The discussion was moved on by the Chair.
Jo Lakey: when will a final decision be made?	AC: consultation closes on 13 March with discussion at Children’s Services Committee on 10 march. The DCS will decide thereafter whether to go to the next stage, or not which could result in a Public Notice which requires a 4 week

	<p>representation period outside of school holidays. Parents will be informed as soon as the DCS has made the decision.</p>
<p>Paul Speed Lib/Dem parliamentary candidate: I have four points to make</p> <p>1 – how can you claim this is a consultation if written to the occupier?</p> <p>2 – I understand not all the staff are moving to Litcham. Amalgamation is more of a takeover than a merger.</p> <p>3 – performance statistics don't work for schools like this. Mileham has a high number of pupil premium pupils, traditionally regarded as lower performers (by Raise online).</p> <p>4 – Mileham is like a family, not fair to rip the family when Every Child Matters.</p>	<p>AC:</p> <p>1 - I have apologised for this but I don't believe there is a parent that hasn't been made aware of the process. We could extend the consultation period by another week if you feel that would have an impact.</p> <p>2 – there is no legal framework to amalgamate schools but the guidance offers two ways – to close both schools and open one new one which would have to be an academy. The other is to close one and expand the age range of the other. At Litcham the primary was closed and the secondary expanded. That is appropriate in this case but it doesn't mean that all have to go to Litcham.</p> <p>Posts at Mileham will be made redundant and the HR Code of Practice asks governing bodies to sign up and consider this group of staff first when recruiting. The Code of Practice was developed for reorganising schools and has the support of all staff professional associations.</p> <p>SG: 3 – we are aware of the issues around small numbers and using percentages. Our colleagues that make the risk assessments take a more in-depth view and the LA did conduct an audit and so it is not just based on the percentages.</p>
<p>Parent: regarding the consultation process – it would be more reassuring if a democratic process was involved. This is all about a lack of future for Mileham with one outcome. The other is that Mileham remains open - what thinking have you given to helping Mileham grow and improve? Stop denigrating the school and using your statistics.</p>	<p>AC: the Partnership Service has been working with the school for a number of years. The role of the LA is not to promote individual schools.</p> <p>The Chair suggested this be rephrased to 'what conditions need to be met for the LA to continue the school as is'.</p>
<p>GS: the reference to small cohorts was put in the Press. Parents want an apology for the use of misleading assessments. The length of time the children were in school was not taken into account.</p>	<p>AC: factual information was used.</p>
<p>Parents: I wouldn't send my children to Litcham – get off our backs!</p>	
<p>Anna Cooke UKIP parliamentary candidate: I have seen a document which gives the date of closure at the end. This seems to be a done deal. This is smoothing over to tick boxes. The government is plastering houses all over</p>	<p>AC: what happens to the building and site is not under discussion. It is not relevant to the meeting and not a consideration as part of the process.</p>

<p>green land – we need places for children. Closing schools is ridiculous. Who owns the building and the land on which it sits? There are 13 social houses with young families moving in.</p>	<p>The national formula is that 100 homes generates 25 primary age children. We cannot be sure that the parents would choose to send these children to Mileham.</p>
<p>GS: that's because we are under threat of closure – no-one would send their kids here.</p>	<p>AC: there has been no proposal to close the school until recently.</p>
<p>C Woodall: I'd like to go back to the democratic process - Councillor Askew assured us that no other school would be closed on the decision of one person (he read an extract from an email).</p>	<p>AC: the decision making process for school organisation matters was set by NCC Committee last year and is the process which Officers are required to follow.</p>
	<p>SG: standards have been lower than we would like for a number of years. The school was last judged good (by Ofsted) in 2001, then followed three further inspections which were Grade 3, 2 were 'Satisfactory' – the last one in 2013 judged the school to 'Require Improvement'. There is a history of not being good and the school faces significant challenge to become sustainably good. We are working with the feedback we have from the autumn term LA audit (not a formal Ofsted).</p>
<p>Parent: we should have had that information. Why did we only hear about that 2 days ago? The audit was carried out early in the new term and 1 member of staff refused to take part in it. The statistics (4 of 11 children gaining level 4) completely decontextualizes information. Schools can turn round quickly – everyone here has seen it. Ofsted judged safety and happiness as good.</p>	<p>The discussion was moved on by the Chair.</p>
<p>Anna Cooke: is there a real opening to get this school back on its feet?</p>	<p>AC: the process has started and it is not up to us to make the final decision. There is open debate here and at Children's Services Committee on 10th March. The County Councillor will make a statement, all of this goes to build a body of evidence which will be made available to the Members who will be asked to make their recommendations. There is a further 4 week period (the Public Notice period) for people to make representations.</p>
<p>GS: the appendix of consultees – some Parish Council's don't exist.</p>	<p>AC: these were taken from locality maps and Norfolk Association of Local Councils database.</p>
<p>Mileham resident: how will the Mileham children benefit if they move to Litcham (set against the current Ofsted judgments of both</p>	<p>JA: our hope is that Ofsted will visit soon. We have had HMI, Cluster Education Partner visits who all say the result will be a good one. The school is</p>

schools)	unrecognisable from what it was.
Mileham resident: but what benefits will accrue to the kids? Please quantify what benefits.	JA: All young people will get an excellent education. We have worked tirelessly for 2 years to ensure each student gets an excellent education. I won't make a comparison.
GS: Jim has worked with us and has to make sure his people, and ours, are OK, our/their local schools. The partnership works really well.	
Paul Speed: there are 2 unanswered questions. 1 – statistics – the 4 out of 11 children over the last 3 years – surely the whole point is to see continuous improvement. SEN's will never make a 4, but has successfully got them to make progress. They may not have done that in a bigger school, or the chance to develop and grow. 2 – money – we know NCC is in serious deficit – what happens to this building and the parcel of land I believe owned by Mileham Schools Trust – all prime land that could be developed.	SG: the statistics that have been quoted are those that are in the public domain, published by the government. The LA has worked with governors to ask LA professionals to come into the school and look at books etc, using the same evidence base as Ofsted. A warning notice was issued because what they found, it was not just the data, they looked at what is happening in the school. It is about pupils making progress.
Parent: it should have been done before the new head arrived, it takes statistics from that period. Come in again and compare the two.	AC: such audits are done when schools are 'at risk'.
Resident: can you ensure you will maintain the standards at Litcham, or will they fall down to the standards at this school?	JA: we are planning for all eventualities and have plenty of room to accommodate the pupils. Our first priority is the education of all pupils.
Parent: my 2 children attend this school, both went previously to a larger one. One was gifted and talented then below average but is now catching up because of the fantastic teachers here. My second has dyslexia with extra help here -he will fall behind in a larger school can you guarantee he won't?	JA: absolutely, every child matters and every child known is our strapline. The support he gets will continue. Staff and governors all support the students to make as much progress as they can.
Jo Lakey: the statistics are not in the public domain as cohorts are too low. The 2014 school organisation regulations includes a presumption against the closure of rural schools. Where is the feasibility study for this school?	AC: the proposal has not formally been made and it would be inappropriate to do impact assessments at this stage. The factors which the regulations require us to consider are done when once a public notice has been issued and is part of the decision making process.
C Woodall: evidence of the quality of education we know the children and see the evidence yet haven't had an apology for data used out of context. You should retract it and apologise.	AC: it is a fact, over the 3 years, 4 of the 11 children achieved level 4.
GS: the high proportion of SEN in school	AC: the data looks across a number of years.

brings the figures down.	
Anna Cooke: has this school still got a chance of remaining open? (Further reference to the prime site and buildings)	AC: my role is to see through the statutory process. No decision has been made to close it. If a sustainable future can be found to keep it open it will be considered as part of the process. The buildings are not even under discussion. MKM: advised that education and property/land don't talk at this level. It will only come under discussion if the school closes.
SFL on behalf of 2 Litcham parents: what alternatives to closure have been considered? How will closure affect the traffic?	AC: The partnership team have been working with the school over a number of years. The big issue is to find sustainable leadership. Alternatives continue to be looked at. The travel implications are being considered by the admissions team. Further discussion about transport arrangements for children with SEN and eligibility followed. MKM said his understanding was that all will get transport to Litcham School.
Paul Speed: your comment 'no decision has been made - providing a viable alternative can be found'. Why is it that when the school asked about other options they have been told 'no'.	AC: there have been discussions with the partnership team over some time, including a review of the whole Litcham Cluster (in February 2013). This sought to see how they could work better together to address recruitment and retention issues. Much work has been done, schools have been approached, Litcham were the only one who would come forward and offer support to Mileham.
GS: we were told it was too late at the January meeting.	AC: all valid viable alternatives leading to good outcomes for children would have to be taken into account when reaching a decision.
GS: the warning notice was issued yet the school action plan has been ignored. Mention is made of the 31 children that go to schools elsewhere yet there is no mention of the 14 children outside the area that come here.	AC: The LA has a statutory duty to ensure suitable schools in suitable places.
C Woodall: I'd like to question the role of the Children's Services Committee in this. Extract from email read again – I'd like to ask if it is going to be breached again. No democratic process is involved at all. How can we deliver the arguments to be taken into consideration? It's all about the money.	AC: discussion that takes place is recorded and will advise the DCS on whether or not to move to the next stage. MKM: Cllr Askew was angry because nothing was discussed at committee for Eccles because the coalition committee made a decision on the process. AC: it will be discussed at committee but the decision won't be taken there. Finance comment refuted it is about wanting excellence for the children.

<p>GS: everyone is getting emotional – this school has been here for 348 years. £10k per child is quoted yet that isn't the real cost. The figure I got from finance last week is £7972 and that is because there is a high % of SEN.</p>	<p>AC: finance have quoted figures in 3 different ways – budget £9067, all year income £9845, total resources available £10006. Cost of running the school in 2014/15 amounts to £9895 per pupil. Finance is one of the last considerations.</p>
<p>GS: a federation where we fund a third of the heads salary would mean we are financially sound but no-one would send a child to a school under threat of closure.</p>	
<p>Parent: some Litcham parents have their names down to send their children here. Could we do it with your (Litcham) new Headteacher? Would you want to do it again with the new head?</p>	<p>JA: the problem is that for one year it was sustainable but not for longer. We couldn't go into a federation – you can stretch people for one year spread over two sites, but not for longer. David Simington is an experienced school leader and only available for one year. He will be replaced but not by an experienced head. It would be difficult to spread ourselves across 2 schools, which would then impact on pupils' progress.</p>
<p>Resident: is the LA actively seeking an head for the school?</p>	<p>Jo Lakey: it is the role of the governing body, but not best use of finance to recruit a permanent Headteacher. We did hope the arrangement would continue with Litcham but it does seem like the doors are closing. MKM: the small schools strategy which was approved by councillors empowers officers to look at all schools with under 50 on roll. AC: the LA no longer has the authority to support small schools financially. They must work in larger groups to survive. MKM: nationally 210 is the number for a viable school, and federations should have more than 210, with the smallest having 105 pupils. This demonstrates the problem with national context and rural Norfolk.</p>
<p>Resident: the policy is failing. Shouldn't the LA think creatively and encourage others to federate?</p>	<p>AC: we have done that but we cannot force schools to participate and work together.</p>
<p>GS: the terrible attitude of governance (other than Litcham) of schools is 'why should be help when we are good', it is down to governing bodies.</p>	<p>JA: the latest government announcement for schools requiring improvement, is they would sack the Headteacher, governors and force academisation. This is the malaise we are operating in, with academy chains and free schools opening up where there is no need. The pressure on schools is enormous.</p>
<p>Parent: children will have to travel somewhere but some do not have cars to take them to the school of choice. Also who will pay for uniforms?</p>	<p>AC: it is understood that free transport could be provided from Mileham to Litcham and there may be a way in which we can support with the uniform.</p>

Paul Speed: county hasn't always followed the legal process. In January the school were told they were not able to federate. I understand fully why other schools don't want to federate as the decision has already been made to close. The children will suffer when perhaps they shouldn't.	AC: the statutory process and agreed procedure has been adhered to.
C Woodall: your statements have been challenged by solicitors – no longer 'allowed' to seek partnerships because the plan was to go ahead with amalgamating.	AC: there is nothing to stop the school governors looking at a viable alternative. The statutory process has been followed.

MKM closed the meeting and said that the notes would be made available on the NCC website.

The meeting closed at 4.25pm.

Notes from the Public Meetings held at
 Mileham Primary School
 4 March 2015 at 6.00 pm

Present:

Chairman: Mark Kiddle-Morris (MKM), County Councillor

Representing the Local Authority (LA): Alison Cunningham (AC) and Sebastian Gasse SG)

Representing the schools: Litcham School – Jim Adams (JA), Headteacher and Sue Falch-Lovesey(SFL), Chair of Governors

Mileham Primary School – David Simington(DS), Partnership Headteacher and Gary Sinclair(GS), Chair of Governors

16 attendees who signed in represented Governors and staff from Mileham School, Parents, Residents and the EDP. Clerk to the Meeting: Janine Birt, Norfolk County Council

Local County Councillor, Mark Kiddle-Morris opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and introducing the panel.

Alison explained her role within Norfolk County Council, saying that this includes overseeing formal statutory consultations on school organisation. She wanted it to be made very clear that we are at the beginning of a formal process with very distinct stages. Stage 1 (current) is the statutory consultation to gather views before any formal decision is made to publish a Public Notice of the Local Authority's intention. If, as a result of this consultation period, the amalgamation of the Litcham and Mileham schools is the right way forward (an amalgamation would mean the closure of one school and the expansion of the other), a Public Notice will be published in the local Press and displayed at the schools (Stage 2). This is accompanied by the 'Prescribed Information' which completes the 'Full Proposal'. The 'Full Proposal' can be made available to anyone who requests a copy. There is then a 4 week period (no more and no less) during which formal representations and comments can be sent to the School Organisation Team at County Hall. These are finally presented to the Decision Maker for a decision (the Determination : Stage 3).

How each County Council reaches decisions on changes to school organisation, is a matter for each and Norfolk County Council's Children's Services Committee, at its meeting in July

2014, agreed the process for Norfolk. This process means that in the case of school closure, the final 'Decision Maker' is the Director of Children's Services (DCS), in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Children's Services Committee. Any school closure will be an item on the Children's Services Committee agenda before a Public Notice is published.

All responses to the consultation are carefully logged and will be made available to all members of the Children's Services Committee, prior to their meeting on 10th March where their views will help inform the DCS to reach a decision about moving to the next stage, or not.

The School Organisation Team were very much aware that the way in which parents/guardians received a copy of the documents had caused offence and Alison apologised on their behalf. She commented that although names and addresses of parents/guardians had been requested from the school, they were issued with two class lists which contained only the names/addresses of the pupils. Not wanting to cause offence by assuming pupils and parents had the same surname, the term 'The Occupier' was used on addressed envelopes bearing the Norfolk County Council postal frank. While the Team understood the upset this had caused, it had not flawed the process in any way. Further communications would be addressed to the parents/guardians directly. A question and answer session followed:

Question/comment	Response
<p>New village resident: I'm new to the village and we have 2 year old grandson with us. What is the main driver for closure?</p>	<p>AC: there are four factors that brought the County Council to consult on the proposed closure of Mileham Primary School, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of sustainable leadership – no permanent Headteacher • A continuing decline in pupil numbers • Difficulty in securing sustainable leadership • Low standards and performance.
<p>Q: have you looked at standards since DS has been here – they are increasing and getting better.</p>	<p>SG: the LA audit led to the immediate issue of a warning notice. It does take time to see improvements and we need to keep an eye on standards, which were inadequate and we have a duty to the children in the school now.</p>
<p>Q: why can't the school be given longer (my child doesn't come here) but standards have risen since DS arrived.</p>	<p>SG: standards have been lower than we would like for a number of years. The school was last judged good (by Ofsted) in 2001, then followed three further inspections which were Grade 3, 2 were 'Satisfactory' – the last one in 2013 judged the school to 'Require Improvement'. There is a history of not being good and the school faces significant challenge to become sustainably good.</p>
<p>Q: it doesn't mean that the next person couldn't continue to rise standards.</p>	<p>SG: Norfolk has over 400 schools and it is becoming almost impossible to appoint Headteachers in some cases. It is a difficult job to run a small school with the demands of local management combined with a 60% teaching</p>

	commitment. The school hasn't been able to find a partner and it has been a struggle for some bigger schools and federations to make good leadership appointments.
Q: how many applications have been made for places from September?	A: that information is not available to us tonight.
Parent: my 4 children started in September, one has autism and is now achieving grades he couldn't get elsewhere. No-one will want to be the head of a school that is closing. The walk to Litcham is along a 60mph road.	AC: the issue of transport is being addressed for children aged 8+ and for SEN children.
Q: I won't send my children to Litcham, this small school, it's like a second family here. You are breaking up a whole family.	SG: we would expect any mainstream school to keep children safe, comfortable and to cater for their needs.
Q: why should the current staff pay for the previous Ofsted?	SG: it has been the case for a number of years.
Q: the pragmatics of moving schools – talk of mobiles at Litcham, from established facilities into temporary accommodation.	AC: if there is a need, additional accommodation will be supplied. Some preliminary discussions have taken place but we cannot re-judge this process. JA: we are planning for all eventualities. DS: it's about what happens in the classroom, not whether it is permanent or temporary.
Q: on the matter of standards – there is a feeling that the audit was something that suited the LA to slam our standards, before the new head has the chance to make the change. Governors should have had a response to the action plan which could then have been updated, but we had no response. Surely the inspector should have come back. Let's look at what is happening now.	SG: colleagues from the intervention and inspection service run a meticulous evidence based process and contract serving Ofsted inspectors with a brief to do an audit. They are paid to do a good job and do not pre-judge the outcome. Risk assessments and data are analysed first with audits commissioned to follow up on concerns and are run in conjunction with the governing body. The Partnership Service doesn't ask for that to happen. In all four areas the school was found to be inadequate.
Q: the team have come back at our request – but they have no interest in looking after the children.	SG: I don't recognise that.
Governor comment: there was a 2 hour visit at the schools' request. We had dealt with all the issues and they didn't come back until we requested it.	
GS comment: small size cohorts make it difficult to judge – of the 11 that sat the tests, 4 achieved the benchmark but there is no mention that some are SEN and some had been in the school for less than 2 terms. Everything on the warning notice was fixed. Standards have got better and parents know	Update from the Admissions Team: Mileham was available for parents to cast their preferences for Reception 2015 round but the round closed on 15 January so parents cannot now apply online for any school. The majority of parents who applied for Mileham applied online. The in-year admissions on-line form requires parents to

<p>these children are doing better. 4 or 5 parents have tried to apply for a place at Mileham but it has been taken off the LA admissions website. That's shoddy (see update). New social homes are being built, those children will come here.</p>	<p>type in school name so again not restricted. If anyone has any difficulty applying for school places they are asked to email admissions@norfolk.gov.uk or telephone our CSC on 0344 800 8020</p>
<p>Parent: there are 4 controversial points –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A continuing decline in numbers – they have been growing with 5 admitted in the last month. 2. House building in Mileham – it is quite likely that people would bring their children here. 3. No sustainable leadership –aware of the crisis back in April when the head resigned. We were told we would be helped to federate, it's not fair to say it's the fault of Mileham staff and governors that we haven't found a partner. 4. Leadership – there might be a solution – it may be that DS can stay? 5. Partnership – it's the LA's failure to make that happen. 6. Unacceptably low standards – that's very controversial. Standards are improving. I challenge Mr Gasse's statement 'that governing Bodies make decisions'. Comments are standards are deliberately misleading. 1 teacher didn't participate – we've never seen the evidence. But there's really good evidence about children's attainment – KS1 results were good last summer, KS2 last year weren't bad, 1 child couldn't sit the exam which counted as 17% against. Year 3 has 5 in the group all at or above national levels. 	<p>AC: there is a nationally adopted formula for growth which shows that for every 100 home built they would generate up to 25 primary aged children. So the 28 homes could generate 7-8 children who may not attend the local school. That is replicated all over Norfolk. The LA has no authority to tell parents which school their children should go to. DS: I'm not a sustainable leader – I'm not going to stay another 2 or 3 years. I have offered to support and stay on as long as it's required if another solution is found.</p>
<p>Q: my youngest starts in September and has been on the list for over a year. If everyone goes to Litcham, will they accommodate the next year?</p>	<p>AC: yes, that will happen automatically.</p>
<p>Q: re the house building – 30 homes promised.</p>	<p>AC: the formula would say that generates approximately 8. You have to plan in some assumptions when planning for growth.</p>
<p>Q: of the 11 children in the village who go to other schools, it should be noted that many were established in those schools before they moved to Mileham.</p>	<p>SG: we obtain figures from health etc and have to make some assumptions. Our forecasting takes into account parental preferences and uses 9 year trend data. AC: there are many schools of similar size in the</p>

	cluster who at the moment, have solutions which make them sustainable.
Chair of Mileham PC: if the decision follows the 4 week representation period, which takes us to May/June, that doesn't leave long to address building and transport matters? The higher than average percent of SEN – would Ofsted come back within 2 year periods?	AC: we are planning for all eventualities. SG: Ofsted could turn up and inspect the school at any time. We have no control over their programme. AC: Ofsted will not be aware of the current consultation.
Chair of Mileham PC: the small class sizes – how will they compare at Litcham?	DS: Litcham's current PAN is 15 and class sizes vary from year, the school will be at capacity at 105. Reception has 15 and other classes have 30. On standards let's be clear - I'm protective of my school – children could benefit from being in a larger school. AC: our admissions team will work closely with families to ensure they get the school of their choice.
Q: some legal parties have not been consulted. We are seeking advice from a solicitor on seeking partnership. You didn't point us to the legislation	AC: it was made very clear to governors that they have a right to make a viable proposal for an alternative.
Parent: I live in Litcham. What will happen about the parking? Parking is dreadful.	JA: it is not an issue that is in any control of the school.
Governor: could you seek a CPO for parking on the adjoining fields?	MKM: the council is aware of the parking issues.
Q: is Litcham in the same Ofsted category as Mileham?	JA: yes and we are awaiting re-inspection. HMI and CEP visits, our own 'mock' Ofsted and data all point to a good outcome. The sooner the team arrives the better!
Staff: Pupil numbers - I've worked nearly 13 years here. Numbers then were fairly similar, went up to 55 and then back down again.	SG: demonstrates the past patterns and demographics of those that lived in the area. AC: our main source of data is birth data, there is a 9 year decline and stagnation and always some variation but we always start with 'real' children.
Parent: if my autistic son was to attend Litcham how would I collect him without transport? How will I ensure his safety?	JA: we have very good SEN provision and the children are looked after, and make good progress.
Litcham parent: how will you accommodate the extra children – how will it work?	JA: we have had preliminary discussions with the LA. No class will be bigger than 30. There are a number of different plans based on a number of different outcomes. SFL: this was a very important decision for the Litcham Governors.
Q: building in Litcham, will they get priority over the Mileham children?	JA: no it would be up to the LA to provide the additional accommodation. AC: we do have funding for 'basic need' (extra

	children) and there is space on the site to provide that.
Governor: I would like to thank JA and DS for partnering with us for one year. I'm not totally against the amalgamation. Litcham have been fantastic in the partnership.	
Q: who decides if the consultation period can be extended? People are saying they haven't seen the documents.	AC: I do, I have apologised about the way the letters were addressed and I do not believe it has affected the consultation. There are some Parish Councils clerked by the same people who have said their package was not delivered. We have hand delivered to one Clerk and will email the other in the morning. The consultation will remain open until Friday 20 March.
Parent Governor: I'm concerned about the welfare of the staff and children. Would staff automatically get a job at Litcham?	AC: there is no legal framework to amalgamate schools but the guidance offers two ways – to close both schools and open one new one which would have to be an academy. The other is to close one and expand the age range of the other. At Litcham the primary was closed and the secondary expanded. That is appropriate in this case. Posts at Mileham will be made redundant and the HR Code of Practice asks governing bodies to sign up and consider this group of staff first when recruiting. The Code of Practice was developed for reorganising schools and has the support of all staff professional associations. It would be up to the governors at Litcham if people were offered jobs. SFL: Governors will be asked to sign up to the Code at their meeting next week. DS: the dedication of staff here and at Litcham is exactly the same. We'd want to bring on everyone. There is no evidence that bigger or small classes make any difference. We would want to work on the interventions with SEN children.
Q: would transport be provided to other schools?	AC: it would be usual to provide transport to the next catchment school which is Litcham. Litcham will become the designated school for Mileham.
Chair of Mileham PC: the document outlines the cost per pupil – what will Litcham get for these children? Why does it cost more to education them at Mileham?	SG: the same per pupil funding formula will apply as does for all schools. AC: advised that the LA used to be able to fund 'phantom pupils' which covered the cost of the teacher per class. Under new regulations, that discretion had gone.
Q: on the matter of standards – will the views of parents be taken into account?	SG: all feedback will be compiled and presented to the Director of Children's Services. All responses will be made available to Members of the Children's Services Committee.

<p>New village resident: Norfolk is a beautiful county with no great problems, but I am shocked by the bad Ofsted reports – it is a poor reflection on Norfolk LA.</p>	<p>SFL: as governors, we have to take responsibility for that. Governing Bodies cannot blame other people – we have the responsibility to work with the LA.</p> <p>SG: we’re not happy with standards in Norfolk overall. The LA got an ‘ineffective judgement’ in 2013 for its support for school improvement and in 2014 we were judged as ‘effective’. The Ofsted report did say there is more to do, including work to increase the proportion of good and better schools still further, with a sharper focus on secondary schools and the smallest primary schools.</p>
<p>GS: if we can get 6 months to a year we’ll make the improvements. We’ve made improvements in the last 2 – 3 months.</p>	<p>SG: we alerted the cluster governing bodies to the need for partnership 2 years ago. Many schools are too small and not sustainable on their own. We did try but it takes willing partners – we can’t force others to federate.</p>
<p>Resident: this needs a bit of passion and support from the village – it’s a pretty dead village but with support could become thriving.</p>	
<p>Parent: I challenge your failure to accept the actual experience of actual people. Failure to acknowledge evidence of standards. Rubbishing the school to the Press etc, despite that numbers have been growing. You have failed to acknowledge pressure on Litcham already (traffic etc). The lack of democracy in the whole process – when can we put our evidence before the committee? We have no confidence in this process.</p>	<p>MKM: I will email the committee members and tell them that the available evidence is in the Members Room should they want to see it. I will pass on your comments to the committee when I am allowed to speak.</p>
<p>Q: my daughter will be devastated to move. Is there anything we can do to keep the school open?</p>	<p>SG: send your formal response to the consultation.</p>
<p>GS: give us one year – we are a new governing body and will have a new head.</p>	<p>SG: you are asking something that I cannot do.</p>
<p>Parent Governor: if this goes ahead to Public Notice, when will it be issued?</p>	<p>AC: there has to be a 4 week representation period, outside of school holidays. We would aim to issue that on 13 April 2015. The DCS is required to take a number of factors into consideration, including the presumption about rural schools and the social aspects.</p>
<p>Q: what is the role of the Schools Adjudicator in the process?</p>	<p>AC: some bodies have the right of appeal, these are the Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses and the Governing Body of Foundation or Trust schools only.</p>
<p>Chair of Mileham PC: the school is central to</p>	

our village and we would be sad to see it closed.	
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MKM thanked those present for attending, and closed the meeting. The notes would be made available on the NCC website.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Appendix D

Extract from the minutes of Children's Services Committee 10 March 2015

- The Local Member for Mileham, Mr M Kiddle-Morris addressed the Committee in objection to the proposal.
 - It was confirmed that there was sufficient space at Litcham School to accommodate the proposed increase in pupils.
 - Norfolk County Council would try to ascertain ways of mitigating the costs of school uniform for those families who could not afford it.
 - The Assistant Director for Education advised that there was no viable alternative to the proposal as set out in the report.
 - The Assistant Director Education said that there were some lessons that could be learned from the initial consultation which opened on 13 February and that these would be taken on board in the future.
- 10.10 On being put to a vote and with 10 votes in favour, 7 votes against and 0 abstentions, the Committee agreed to support the recommendation that the Interim Director of Children's Services should publish a statutory notice concerning the proposed closure of Mileham Primary School in order to amalgamate it with Litcham School.

Appendix E

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal?	Do you have any other comments or suggestions you would like to make to help us with this decision and in planning for the future provision of the children? - Please write your answer here:	Please tell us who you are: - Respondent	At which school? - Please write your answer here:
Disagree	I don't agree with this decision, the travel issue is one, the worry of litcham school being big enough for the children is another also the one on one's which some students need and which mileham is so good at being another	Parent / Guardian	mileham
Disagree	I would like mileham school to stay open as it provides a good stable enviroment for the local children I don't see WHY Mileham children can't stay at Mileham School.....surely Litcham can't accommodate them?	Parent / Guardian, Local resident	mileham primary school
Disagree	Will transport be provided? All areas that were of concern as pointed out by the LA were addressed & implemented & continue to be monitored & reviewed.	Parent / Guardian	Mileham
Disagree	A proposal / vision was put forward showing how we can make the school sustainable going forward & make the curriculum exciting & forward thinking. The value of a 'Village School' education is often hidden beneath statistics and tables of attainment!	Governor	Mileham Primary School
Disagree	The ability to grow the community bond from a young age is priceless. It helps maintain rural life and build stregth in Village values	Local resident	St Mary's Beetley
Agree	I can't see how keeping a school with 20-30 pupils open is beneficial to pupils, parents or budget. *I have concerns about the provision for individual children's needs being met by such a large institution.	Local community group	(Mileham Parish Council)
Disagree	*I also have concerns about the damage that the community will suffer when such a central feature is lost. *also I am concerned for the staffs employment prospects.	Local resident	

I would love to see the school remain open as it is, both of my children attended Mileham Primary and I began my career as a teaching assistant there. It was a fabulous experience and a real shame that a way cannot be found/afforded to keep the school open for others to enjoy and benefit from.

It will be a huge loss for the community to close the school as it provides a central focus to the village, bringing everyone together at it's summer fetes and sports days etc.

Those members of the community who don't have their own transport will surely suffer as I cannot imagine the council will be providing transport for the two mile journey you will be imposing.

I believe a school helps attract young families to an area it also brings jobs to the village and all that that entails, it may jeopardize the village shop and further isolate the existing residents as a consequence.

Disagree	<p>There has been a primary school in Mileham since 1677 don't let it go!!</p> <p>Litcham schools last report was not the best, bringing more children into the school is not going to help matters. At the moment Litcham School children have to share classes. Class 1 and 2 are joint with some of the year 1 still residing to reception class to learn. IF this is to go ahead i seriously think that the Children will be losing out on learning even more than they are now. Can Litcham School Library not be converted to another class room to give the younger children chance to learn on their own, and not have to learn at the pace of 7 year olds. Can the Library not be moved in to a van that visits or in to a separate part of the school. The parking at Litcham is a serious issue at present with more parents coming to the school this will only make matter worse. I think it is unfair on the Children at Litcham to have to suffer to allow more children in. Why Litcham?</p>	Local resident	
Disagree	<p>I believe every child should live within walking distance from their primary school, if this goes ahead these children can NEVER walk or cycle to school as the road is far too dangerous. The alternative is to be driven to a school that already has problems with too many cars and the police are now getting involved, how is adding more cars to the equation going to Help? Even if transport is provided who will pay? When the new reception children go to school part time how will they get home? Who would want to send their 4yr old to school on a bus that will not have</p>	Parent / Guardian	Litcham Primary
Disagree	<p>I believe every child should live within walking distance from their primary school, if this goes ahead these children can NEVER walk or cycle to school as the road is far too dangerous. The alternative is to be driven to a school that already has problems with too many cars and the police are now getting involved, how is adding more cars to the equation going to Help? Even if transport is provided who will pay? When the new reception children go to school part time how will they get home? Who would want to send their 4yr old to school on a bus that will not have</p>	Parent / Guardian	Litcham school

adult supervision?

Maybe we should look at why 31 children from the village are going to other schools, if you improve Mileham would they come back? Surely those families can turn around the fortunes for the school.

There are 28 children there at this moment, There could be another 4 and the demographics that the Governors were shown DID not take into account the 15 or so houses that are being built in Mileham in the Near future, even if these social family houses have 2 kids of school age then there is at least 30 kids and if 35% of them were high school age and another 35% were pre school that would still leave at least 10/11 kids that could come to Mileham. The school will never get to the Magic number of 50 that the NCC want and I don't think you would fit 50 kids in there as far as a federation and further partnerships go it seems like all other schools have been WARNED against Mileham so it can be closed, Some governors in other schools in the area knew NOTHING about being asked to form a partnership with Mileham, The petition started on Facebook CHANGE.ORG has some truly wonderful comments from Mileham, London, Belgium even New Zealand all about how a smaller school is great for children.

Disagree

Governor

Mileham
Primary

my children attend mileham. we moved here because of the school. The education they have received had been excellent.

living locally has given them the independence , and responsibility, to take themselves to school.

my children are aware of the educational needs of their classmates who are not as academically able. this is due to the size of the class, and they are always willing to help. This is yet another of "life's" lessons they would not be getting in a larger class group.

Disagree

Parent /
Guardian

mileham
primary
Brisley CE
VA

Agree

Parent /
Guardian

Primary
Litcham
Primary

Disagree

There is social housing planned to be built in Mileham (Burghwood Drive) 15 houses I believe, also where the Saw Mill is currently sited in Back Lane, this land is for sale, again I believe houses will be built here.

Where there's social housing there's going to be families with children.

Litcham is a nightmare for parking at school start & finish times & dangerous.

Instead of looking at the past of Mileham School with regards to progress, try looking at the present.....the new Acting Head & present Governing Body have worked wonders in pushing forward the figures & making people accountable (staff & governors)

Has anyone asked the children how they feel? It's all very well forging forward with your plans....but what about those it affects directly?

We want to be able to explore federation, yet we've been told NO.....why? It's always been our agenda to do this & believe it is the way forward.....where is the support to do this?

Disagree

Local resident

Mileham

Disagree

Local resident

Mileham

Disagree

The children would like to retain Mileham Primary School in its current state.

Governor
Local resident

Mileham

Disagree

Strategic planning to allow mini Clusters of primary schools within the Cluster as a whole.

Parent /
Guardian

Mileham

Disagree

Why close our school why uproot our children why take away yet another piece of the history of mileham you be lied about so many things what's to stop you lieing about the funding ???

Parent /
Guardian

mileham

As a parent of a child who goes to Mileham school I have to say the quality of teaching is excellent and she is doing fantastically. My son is also due to start in reception there in September and is looking forward to it greatly as he has been on several occasions and sees what a wonderful place it is.

Surely small classes allowing teachers to work very closely with pupils is the ideal situation and should be cherished, not closed down. To say that this is being done for the good of the children is ridiculous as they are all doing fantastically at the school and will be heartbroken to have to move.

In terms of the statistics showing that the school is underperforming, the fact that this is a such a small school renders such statistics meaningless. You can not draw conclusions from such a small sample size. As a scientist if I were to draw research conclusions based on only 28 data points my work would be rejected out of hand. Instead much more emphasis should be on what the parents say, after all nobody can assess their child's progress better than their parents. The vast majority, if not all, the parents of Mileham children would agree that standards at the school are nothing short of excellent. The school should be supported and allowed to continue to flourish and progress.

Disagree

Parent /
Guardian

Mileham
Primary

my children go to this school , and it is fantastic , they both enjoy going to school and have excellent teachers and lovely friends . Not to mention this school does not just educate it cares about the children as individuals too . Every child matters at this school not just for ofsted and league tables like other schools but because they are a family .

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the school for looking after the children the way every school should i would travel miles to come to this school so dont see why people would close it without a justifiable reason . i also have a disabled husband and it concerns me that if the school closes i will have to leave him for more than 20 mins as traffic at the other school is bad and he has epelipsy so leaving him could be life treating to him , as we are next door to the school for that reason i never have to leave him unattended for more than i need to . yes you may say i can take him with me but however he is disabled with a brain injury so this would mean extra pressure and work for me to get him up,dressed and in the car with the children .

Disagree

Parent /
Guardian

mileham

I am happy with mileham school as they understand our individual needs and the children have suffered extreme trauma with their dads accident and to move schools i feel will set them back , we have only just finish physiotheapy with the children as they were anxious about leaving their dad just incase he will be ill while they were at school they have i overcome this with not only help from the colman hospital but help from the school governors and teachers . They have changed my childrens confidence and i fear this will be lost very quickly with a school move and i know this will affect their education achievements . My son is already a sen child so this is only going to add fuel to the fire .

Disagree	<p>I attended the meeting on Wednesday evening and could feel a real passion from the staff, children, parents and governors in wanting to keep their school open. Some parents moved to the village so they could get their children to school as they don't have access to a car. Please take this into account and consider very carefully what the children, staff, parents and governors want. The standards in the school are raising and given the chance they will continue to do so. Please keep our school open. if you were really thinking off the children you would nt even have this on the agenda, its all about money and if us parents treated our children as you are treating them now they would be taken away,. Children Services is as i believe for the good of the children not the wallet. just by proposing this shows you havent got a clue about our school and the standard within it. The village consist of elderly residents, these people won t live forever and younger families will move into our village, and this will be a positive move, you can speculate all you like but people die, new people move in its called a cycle. leave us alone let us keep our school and we will prove you were wrong to even think about closing it.</p>	Local resident	Parent / Guardian	mileham
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I'm a parent of a child at Mileham my oldest son attended as did his father & his aunts & cousins it's always been a small but friendly school I moved to the village 2 years ago but travelled to put both my boys in Mileham prior to moving they both started here in reception & love the whole family feeling. A lot of these children are SEN, no mine aren't, & this would cause a lot of upset & stress for them & their families, this has all been very underhanded with Litcham parents only informed a few weeks ago which is going to have just as much impact on them as it has on us. There are plans for 20 something affordable new homes in the village we have a lovely friendly shop & post office why close our school that has stood in the village for almost 400 years we have the new play area, the castle ruins. Given a chance this school can & would turnaround please don't let this be sold to a property developer & more new unaffordable housing can be built.

Disagree

Parent /
Guardian
Local
resident

Mileham
silly
question

Disagree

At the 14:30 meeting on Wed 4th March it was apparent from the majority of parent attendees that Mileham was the school of choice for their children.

The representatives from Childrens Services stated that should Mileham close then parents would retain the right of choice for alternative schools to Litcham.

The representatives further stated that transport would be provided to Litcham for the Mileham children, and that potential existed for help in the provision of Litcham school uniforms.

It is my understanding that no such transport or potential uniform provision will be available other than that for children transferring to Litcham.

Consequently, not all parents will be able to exercise this right of choice since they may lack the financial means to do so.

Disagree

Local
resident

Mileham
Primary
School

I consider this to be discriminatory and wholly unjust.

I am therefore opposed to the closure of the Mileham school.

As a mother of a former pupil at Mileham Primary School I do not agree with it's closure for the following reasons;

This would reduce the choices for parents in the area.

Not all children thrive in a larger school.

Disagree

Mileham is a wonderful school. Your plans should be based on evidence and should seek to promote the best interests of children. This process has failed in both respects. The proposed closure of Mileham is the product of a failing Local Authority casting around for ways to reduce costs, appear effective and divest itself of as much involvement in the running of educational provision as it possibly can. This is a betrayal of local democracy in general and a betrayal of the children and community of Mileham. Shame on all of those involved in imposing these policies.

Local
resident

Mileham

Disagree

Governor

This is an asset to Mileham Village and has been for hundreds of years, there are new houses being built in the village and the school is a necessary part of the village. Mileham Parish Council objects to the closure of the School. Classes at Litcham are already full so will there have to be mobile units put in place? If so this will take away recreation space - where will the children play?

The Consultation is Flawed as the Parish Council in Mileham was not consulted and how many other Important Consultees had not been consulted?

Whilst the Ofsted report for Mileham was poor so was the report for Litcham.

Disagree	What can the Parish Council do to help keep Mileham Primary School open?	Local community group	Mileham Parish Council
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The LA says that we are failing. This is untrue we are, like Litcham (overall RI) with the difference being that Litcham primary provision was inadequate and the school still has to address issues around assessment and target setting. The HMI on her second visit to Mileham said that she felt confident that we would achieve a 'good' grade at our reinspection and felt no need to publish a second section 8 letter. In meetings and on our change.org petition Litcham parents made it very clear that they did not want to amalgamate with Mileham as they felt it would make problems at Litcham worse.

Most of our parents do not have their own transport and there is extremely limited

public transport. To expect young children to undertake at least a 4 mile round walk each day is totally unrealistic and is additionally a safeguarding issue. There is no pavement beyond Mileham Village until well into Litcham. The road is straight and vehicles travel at very high speeds along it. It would be ironic if children and/or their families were injured or killed as a direct result of the school being closed and blame would be laid at the LA's door. Our children working with the local police have reduced speeding in Mileham itself.

I led the 2010 inspection at Mileham and was impressed by the keenness of children to learn and the way that teachers helped them to learn and the level and quality of support given to children and their families. Behaviour was good, The headteacher had been there less than a year but had started to make positive changes. I became a governor in November 2011- but unsurprisingly the LA lost my records so my current term ends in 2017. In summer of 2014 we had our best ever results in KS1 and KS2 with all 6 children in Y6 achieving 100% L4B+ in reading alongside the highest achieving schools in the county. We got 67% in writing and 50% in maths. 3 of our Y6 children had significant SEND. We also have high proportions with FSM. Our last report said quite clearly that floor standards could not be considered when cohorts were so small and numbers/SEND vary year on year. When Ed Pearson Shaul (the previous HT) and I went to a large meeting with other schools who were RI, we were told that at our next reinspection the attainment data from the year we were inspected MUST NOT be used as it would skew the progress made since becoming RI and particularly so for

Disagree

Governor

Mileham
Primary

small schools. So what does the LA do - uses the data from the last FIVE years

to suit their own devious purposes and provide a gross misinterpretation of the progress we have made and continue to make. We also have possibly the highest proportion of SEND children all of whom make significant progress from their far lower starting points. Many families have moved their children from other schools including special schools because of our outstanding reputation in helping their children to learn and succeed. These children will not receive the time and support they need to thrive and would be 'lost' in a bigger school and their confidence would collapse.

Look at our change.org petition and the very many supportive positive comments from the Mileham/Litcham area, around the UK and across the world. They and many other rural communities want Mileham to survive.

The village community has come together to fight the closure. At least 30 new homes affordable/rented are being built and this will mean that many more families who are most vulnerable will need a local school. As governors we already know that parents were told that Mileham would be closed from September 2015. This is absolutely outrageous and unacceptable of the LA as no decision has supposedly yet been made. One parent with 4 children said she wanted to send her children to Mileham but as the school was closing there was no point, I live in London and there is need to move people out of cities and overcrowded boroughs to more rural areas. This is certainly going to happen to Norfolk. and other rural areas.

Mobility is also extremely high due to some short term social housing in the village The LA has taken no account of how well our children do if they have been in school for less than 2 terms.

We have possible projects which will only go ahead if Mileham stays open. One involves the UEA and Mileham Castle. This will boost our children's future expectations as young adults

It is time that Norfolk LA acted with integrity, honesty and vision not only for our children but for all the rural communities and villages who live in fear of their school closing and their villages withering away.

As a LA you are supposed to provide for every child's best possible education we are doing that at Mileham and are always improving the quality and content of our provision

Standards are increasing.

The GB is clear on areas for improvement.

Keep it open - it is an improving school.

Leadership could be sought and secured if this proposal was not in place.

Disagree	Last May, my daughter had an external assessment for dyslexia where she was given a reading age of less than 5 years. In Sept last year it had risen to 6.11 and now is 8.2 (same test). That is progress - the teacher's listen and work with families and this is a successful model. This will destroy the village and upset the balance of learning the children have.	Parent / Guardian	Mileham
Disagree	The school has been in the Village for over 300 years and with house's being built in the village where would their	Parent / Guardian, Governor	Mileham

children go as Litcham is already full.

I went to this school as did my family and most of my friends my 2 daughters are there

also they have a strong bond with everyone their as it is like a family to everyone.

The school is one of the best that deals with all types of problem children as people pick it because of the way the staff teach and the whole feeling of happiness the children have as they come on a lot while being taught.

Disagree	Teaching is not just about getting them to write or count but how they get ready for life in a real world.	Parent / Guardian	Mileham
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